MEDIA RELEASE

$210m for mental health nurse services welcome

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN) today welcomed the Australian Greens Party’s policy on mental health, including $210 million for the Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program (MHNIP).

“We welcome this significant commitment to mental health from the Australian Greens, particularly the funding to expand the MHNIP,” Adjunct Associate Professor Kim Ryan, CEO of the ACMHN said.

“There is clear evidence that the MHNIP is cost effective, improves health outcomes and delivers many benefits for individuals and communities. Securing the future of this program is a no-brainer.”

“The MHNIP is a successful program which keeps people with complex mental illness out of hospital and helps them live productive lives. With an extra $70million per year, these services will be accessible to many more vulnerable Australians.”

The MHNIP funds mental health nurses to work collaboratively with GPs and psychiatrists to support people with severe and persistent mental illness.

The program was capped by the Australian Government in May 2011 and access for new medical practices has been limited. Current funding allocations in the forward estimates are insufficient to meet existing service levels.

“We would like to see all major parties commit to continuing and growing this vital program. We call on whoever forms the next Australian Government to match the funding commitment of the Australian Greens,” Professor Ryan said.

The ACMHN has previously called for an increase of funding to $301 million over four years from 2013-14 to secure the future of the MHNIP.

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